FOREWORD

Not only the intelligentsia and the news paper readers but even the people who move in the bazars and meet different classes of people, can see that mass deg-neration has created a temperament of self-centredness in the country today. It has created dangers which even the external aggression can/not. Still more lamentable is the fact that nobody seems concerned about this state of affairs and the damage it can do. Everybody is content with himself and feels that the country may burn to ashes so long as his own house is safe. As the speaker says. "Nobody is left wlth sublime feelings and thoughts, and respect or regard for humanity. It appears as if our hearts and minds have been afflicted with paralysis and our conscience is totally paralysed and has lost all its power to react."

2. Intense concern for this state of affairs, and the consequent threat to Indian society forced Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi to leave all educational and literary activities and come out, not caring about his old age and indifferent health, to take the messaga of humanity to the people and to kindle in their hearts a fire of love, to shake up their conseience and try to make them aware of their responsibilities. It was for this purpose only that Halqa-e-Payam-e-Insaniyat (Message of Humanity forum) came

into being and its members toured, under Maulana's leadership, a number of important areas of different states. They found a number of people likeminded and brought many more round to their views.

3. One of such delegations made a quick but successful tour of some western districts of Uttar Pradesh in April, 1983. The tour started on 6th of April from Rampur. Public meetings were arranged at Meerut, Moradabad, Hapur, Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr and different cities and towns in the area. It was endeavoured that the message should reach the maximum number of people in the minimum possible time. In these meetings, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Harijans, in fact, all sections of the society participated. At some places Non-Muslims even presided over the functions. Every one welcomed the delegation and its message; expressed deep appreciation of and agreeement with the objectives, and even offered their services.

4. The last and the most important visit of the tour was Aligarh, Muslim University, Aligarh, which has played an important and effective role in Indian history or the recent past, especially in the freedom struggle. and has given a new direction to the country. Creative talent is still available in the University. Youth, full of vigour, vitality and capabilities are still to be found here. The country and the nation can rightfully have great expectations from its teachers and students.

5. Maulana's speech was scheduled for 16th April, 1983 at 7 p.m. in the Kennedy Hall of the University. Teachers and students of the University attended in large numbers. The entire hall, including the galleries and passsages, was full beyond capacity. The undersigned threw light on the purpose and aims and objectives of the programme. Then Maulana addressed the audience for about an hour. The speech was heard in rapt attention. It was, perhaps, the interest, attention and involvement of the audience which made Maulana give his best. "Exp ression of love was not the urge of my heart alone; Her eyes also seemed to demand this."

6. Maulana in his speech, surveyed the ills and weaknesses pervading the Indian Society today and warned against the dangers created by them. He called upon the intellectuals to come out to fight against the destruction of the society. He said "there are two sections of human society which are last to succumb to, corruption, namely, the religious people and the intellectuals. Only they can be expected to stem the rot. It is their responsibility to come forth forgetting not only their own self-interests, but even those of their class and community. They should come out to **give** and not to **take**, and to pull back the society and the country from the path of destruction. If even these groups fail in their duty and responsibility, it will be a tragedy, not only for the community but for the whole couutry. And the future historians would be constrained to write that Indian society reached the brink of disaster and succumbed to dangers even though there

existed institutions like Muslim University, Jamia Millia, Darul–Uloom and Nadwa." In this speech the duties and responsibilities of the intellectuels were highlighted. It has an enlightening message not only for the intellectuals of the country but the whole world:

7. The speech was tape-recorded and is being published with minor modifications after the speaker has gone through it. It is hoped that the intellectuals of our country would respond spontaneously to this message and would make it a focous of their struggle. We pray that Allah may give us the capacity to study the environment, to analyse the situation correctly and to struggle for its reform. *AMEEN*

Dr. Mohd. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi
Akbari Gate, Lucknow (U. P.

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Country on a dangerous turn and the responsibility of the Intelle-ctuals

"If only there had been among the generations before you men possessing a remnant (of good sense) to dissuade (their poopie) from corruption on Earth, as did a few of them we saved from amongst them. The Wrong-doers followed that by which they were made sapless, and were guilty." - (Quran). Respected teachers and dear students.

I have just recited a verse from the Holy Quran. I confess that I am not able to translate fully the anguish, reality and force that it contains. I have been a student of the Holy Quran and can claim fair knowledge of Arabic, but I admit that anguish which this verse creates is difficult to translate into any other language.

Allah says why the generations which came before you did not have some men who had a little good sense left and had concern for the humanity; those who could dissudde the people from spreading the degeneration and the destruction which was rampant. Except for these few whom He saved, they were all swept off by the tides

of the times and started profitting from the abundant luxuries and the opportunities offered by the degeneration. They enjoyed themselves while the going was good. As we know, it is easy to find opportunities to profit from a disturbed situation and to prosper at the cost of others.

"The wrong-does followed that by which they were made sapless, and were guilty". - (Quran).

Gentlemen : Disease is natural to human beings. It is natural for humans to fall sick. In a way this is a sign of life. Similarly, it is human to err. Stones do not make mistakes; nor do the trees. Only humans make, mistakes and anxiety or dejection over them is needless. It is not so distressing for history and destiny of mankind if a large section of the people goes astray and starts seeking material goods and gets involved in a desperate pursuit of the lowliest ambitions. What is distressing is the sheer lack of people whe would be wlling to stem the rot, to fight against the forces of disintegration and anarchy, even at the cost of their comforts and, often, power. History if full of instances when the society, faced with the threat from such evil forces, was almost on the point of extinction, when suddenly some people appeared who faced the situation with courage and conviction staking every thing they had. The continuity of not only the human race but also of the human values owes a great deal to such people. Human sensitivities and sentiments, moral values and sublime goals, feeling of courage and sacrifice for preservation of these values, all owe

their survival to such people who took up the challenge and faced the degenerate situation with a courage that changed the course of history. Human civilisation is alive thanks to these people only.

Poets, writers and intelletuals of all ages have complained of degeneration of society. But human feelings and good people have still survived. Why ? Because there were some who had the courage to give up self-interest and who risked not only themselves and their families but their future generations as well to save society from the rot. The crop of humanity has always been irrigated by their efforts and sacrifices.

This crop, in fact, needs fertiliser in every age. Just as productivity of the soil depends on fertilisers, crop of humanity needs fertiliser as well, as fertiliser of personal benefits and self-interest which when mixed into the soil gives humanity a new lease of life and gives the human race the will and capacity to survive. The real guarantee of the survival of humanity lies not in the abundance of resources, scientific and technological advance, philosphy and learning, poetry and literature, but in the existence of those few courageous and conscientious people who have hearts which bleed, eyes which have tears and minds which are sensitive; people who would be prepared to face all odds; people who would bear the hardships and would stake their lives to change the course of history. Whenever this class becomes scaree, the entire society faces extinctieneven though superficially

it may appear to be healthy. Just as the fat of a man hides the diseasds inside and gives the appearance of blooming health, likewise, unnatural and abnormal prosperity sometimes appears ever society.

As Iqbal says : This glew and radiance is nothing but abundance of food and nourishment, while the real essence of life is something different. With food and nourishment in the human body a glew does appear on the face but the real strength is somethig else. The real essence of society is the spirit of sacrifice, forbearance, tolerance among its members, and the existence of people who do not get easily provoked nor get out of control. How much respect is given to the pious, how much value is attached to nobleness and how much does the society acknowledge gratitude, how much hatred does it have for oppression : these constitute the essence of a healthy society.

The biggest threat to society (old or modern) arises when it gets prone to oppression and worse still, when the critics of oppression become too microscopic even to be counted on one's fingers-though there might be some who disapprove of the cruelty and oppression to the weaker sections but only in private. When those people become rare who would pronounce their disapproval of oppression publicly and oppose it tooth and nail irrespective of the risk involved, no power on earth can save a society. When oppression becomes the order of the day in a given society, when the yardsticks to identify the

aggressor should be his nationality, his community, his language,his caste, a real danger looms large over humanity. When society gets divided into such compartments, and even in dealing with the aggressor, his religion, his community, becomes more relevant; when people reading about a riot in a newspaper first want to know the community of the aggressor and the victim, no power, intelligence, resources and planning can save such a society.

In the pre-Islamic days, the Arabs had a maxim which had become proverbial : "Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed." The entire Arabia, before Islam, was following this maxim which had become unquestionably their guiding principle. Once the Prophet said to his compansions, "Help your brother whether he is oppressor or oppressed." They should have swallowed it since it was, for the Arabs, a deep rooted, principle, and, then it was being prounced by the Prophet who would tell them no wrong. But with the kind of training the Prophet had given them and the minds which he had moulded, they just could now swallow this and asked, "We should help the oppressed all right, but how should we help the oppressor ?" This kind of training, common sense and conscience which would make people sit up and question oppression, is the surest foundation of society and civilisation, one which could be depended upon. This is the finest example of moral training and the roots it had taken which has no parallel in human history. This was the class of devoted followers which was the finest embodiment of obedience and emulation,

a class which used to dote on the Prophet and could sacrifice their lives on him without asking a question. They would not even pause to think once the Prophet made any pronouncement. But they were the same people, so revolutionised in their thinking that they just could not help reacting when the Prophet advised them to help their brother oppressor or oppressed. They humbly submitted, "O Prophet, you have so for taught us to help the oppressed and not to support the aggressor. Can we believe our dears ? Please tell us how we can help the oppressor". The Prophet replied, "Yes, even oppressor can be helped. Help of the oppressed is that no oppression should be allowed to be committed against him. Help of the oppressor is that you get hold of his hand and don't let him commit oppression."

Now, this is what can save a society. There should be no consideration of race or religion, caste or creed; no consideration of self-interest and personal relations. It should not be our consideration to know who is the oppressor and who the victim. Oppressor should be stopped whether he is the darling of the community, whether he is a leader. Society can be saved if people have this moral courage, non-partisanship and sincerity. If this is missing, no power on earth can save such a society. And, unfortunately, if India today lacks something, it is just this. And this constitutes the biggest threat to our society.

Whenever human race passes through such a phase of moral degradation or comes under the cloud of the

forces of disintegration, two classes come to the fore, one, the intellectuals, and the other, the religious people. These two classes are the last to succumb to corruption. This is what the history tells us. And this a what appeals to common sense also. And once corruption afflicts these two classes, then God save the society.

What we need today is that intellectuals and religious people should come forth to stem the rot. We need people from our universities and seats of learning to come out in an endeavour to save the society. I shudder to think that when the future historians write the history of contemporary society they may record that at the time this calamity befell our society, there existed in the country, a Muslim University, a Darul-Uloom, Deoband, a Nadwat-ul-Ulama, and a Jamia Millia. All that happened was despite them and, in fact, right under their shadow. Need of the hour is that you, the intellectuals, should come out to stem the rot, the corruption, anarchy, degradation, barbarity, hoardings, nepotism, favouritism, aggression and, above all nacked barbarism which is leading the country towards disaster. What is needed is people who have moral courage and and a spirit of selflessness, who would come forward to *give* to the society and not to *take* from it, people who can pull the society and the nation from the brink of disaster. They should be like a *Saqi* (drink server) who serves everyone else but would not touch it himself. This ta-k is rather difficult; it requires tremendous restraint and self-control. But you cannot do without it. I want to tell you, my dear students, that you can get

a place of honour in the country only if you try to save the country by sincere, courageous, selfless and reckless efforts.

A community or a class gets a place of honour only when it benefits others instead of itself, when its people give to others all that they have, when they will extinguish their own lamps to illuminate the houses of others, when they, like Abu Talha Ansari, would feed their guests to their fill, when their own children go to sleep hungry.

If you study history, you would come across a number of such inspiring examples. It is a pity, however, that the factors which work at the roots of historical events and at the back of revolutions, and the hidden forces which change the course of history and the destiny of a country, are completely overlooked by our historians. They merely write that such and such king came and such and such was gone; one country attacked the other; one conquered and the other was vanquished. But they overlook real causes and the factors at work. And then there are reasons behind these causes and factors. As Maulana Rum says, it is hot weather and a man is fanning himself. A myopic will say that the air is coming from the fan. A more intelligent man would say that it is the hand which is waving the fan. If you put the fan down, no air will flow. A wiser man would say that it is not the hand but the will of the man which matters. Another one will say that it is neither air nor the hand, nor even the will, but the

presence of the air itself which matters. But the wisest would say what matters is its Creator, who orders the air to flow and who has given the air the power and freedom to flow and the hand to lift the fan. History also tells us that there are causes behind every event and causes behind the causes and these causes have correlation. When you see a reform coming up in the world, and society rising from its deathbed and starting all over again, behind this you will find a class of people who stake their very lives to achieve this end.

In a country like India which is a conglomeration of different cultures, different communities, with history of its own, where there have been some misunderstandings, bitterness and political upheavels, there is no way, I want to tell you frankly, for atleast the Muslims to find respect except by raising the banner of moral leadership of the country, by making sincere efforts to save the country and to prove that they can even risk their lives to save the country. Let them prove that behind their efforts to save the country there is no selfinterest involved either of themselves or of the community, group or religion, and that the only reward they expect for their services is from God. Let them prove that they are coming out only with a faith and sentiment that this country is a sacred trust that they have to protect, and that all its citizens are created by God, they have to live with all of them; if others are not there, they will not be there either.

India has reached a turn where the educated, the intellectuals and the scholars of our universities and seats

of learning need to come out in the arena. The field now belongs to the intellectuals, the religious people and those selfless workers who have nothing to do with political parties and political ambitions. They do not bother which particular political party would come to power and would get the reins of government. There are instances in the history when time for reward came and the government was being offered on a platter to the people who had worked for .a change, they flately refused to accept it saying that they had worked only with sympathy, sincerity and concern and only for pleasing God, and, therefore, they do not want any reward.

Gentlemen, it is a fact (whtch young people should particularly realise) that it is an important and precious time. Such golden opportunities in the history of communities, nations add countries come up once in centuries. You must thank God that he created you in this Age. There are people who would wish they were not born in this Age. But this is not how the brave and the courageous look at it. I congratulate you, congratulate the Muslims of India, the saner people and all groups and minds which love humanity, for having been born at a time of great opportunity which our forefathers could not have got even after great prayers, after keeping awake all through the nights and fasting all through the days. But today we have that great opportunity and challange that we can serve humanity by our selfless work to take the country out of the jaws of the python, putting even our lives at stake.

I can tell you without being apologetic that I have studied history. I do not think Indian society has ever been under a threat of this magnitude as experienced in the last 30-35 years. I would not hesitate to say that Indian body-politic has faced mutilation many a time, has suffered defeats, and has been subjugated by the foreign rule of the British but the soul of India, and her conscience had never been weakened so much as to stop working altogether.

There was never a phase in Indian history when evil and oppression was telerated so meekly as is being done to day, to the point of retionalising it, and using it as a tool to strengthen cadres, parties and a raison d'etre for the different political parties in India. India has faced hundreds of calamities but its conscience has always remained alive and has never stopped its function.

> I am afraid that the heart that beats may not stop functioning :
>
> Since beating alone is the reason for its existence.

I shudder to think if the Indian conscience is dead. What can be a bigger danger than not finding a single compassionate man who would hear the cries of the oppressed and come out into the field.

The ball of success and fortune has been thrown in (But) no one is coming into the field. What is the matter with the horsemen.'

Leaders, political parties, seats of learning and libraries, speakers and orators, intelligentsia, nay, geniuses may all be there but where is the conscience which would shed tears on this degeneration of society and humanity ? Humanity has survived because of this conscience and not by sword and arrows, by armies and militia men, royal treasures and abundant wealth, nor by the advancement of education, science and technology. It was always the human conscience which prevailed over all these, and created resources where there were none. Imagine what a poor man can do when his heart aches and he is restive. On the other hand, there is one who has all the resources but has no anguish and has no will to do anything. Time passes and he does nothing.

My apprehension is that the conscience of Indian societies is presently faced with that inertia. It has stopped doing its work. This is a cause for alarm, since the future of humanity is dependent on it; whatever good or advancement is expected is dependent on it. Whenever this conscience wakes up, it receives a divine light which is kindled by the prophets. It does not succumb to power or wealth, and it achieves what big empires and huge armies fail to achieve. You must see how some consciences which were alive and virtuous, have done their job in their times. After all what did the holy man have ? What were their resources ? But they created a new society, a new social ordar.

Our regret today is that while we hear all sorts of voices, see all kinds of manifestoes, listen to all types of

protestations, we seldom see an eye that sheds a tear on the degeneration of humanity, loss of human lives and resources, and the destruction of human rights. We see no heart which feels the pain. I believe that such people should be found in the institutions of learning where everything is taught: even if they are just a few young men who would shut their eyes to their future. Like a prophet who in a similar situation, started the reform of his society, which taunted him : "O Saleh (peace be unto him) ! you were a very promising man from whom we had lots of expectations and hopes that you would make your home prosperous and brighten the name of your community and the country. What have you taken up ? What is this trouble you have started ? For his community this was a "trouble". But the sinking ship of humanity has always been saved by such people who have bothered only about the good of the community and not their own selves. But what hopes can you have for a society in which not even a few can be found who would care a fig for position and status if they come in the way of realisa tion of this goal. Such a society carries no weight either in the eyes of God or of humanity. Atleast among the Muslims such bold and determined people have been found in all Ages who never bothered about kings and emperors. Today we need them again. Whatever be heir tnumber, there should be some people who can say :

Go, throw this net on some other prey,
For the nest of phoenix in much too high.

Today the tragedy is that psychologists and experienced people know from repeated experiences that in today's

society every man has his price. If he does not sell himself for one price, he will surely sell himself for the other. But there have always been, and should always remain, some people who cannot be bought, people who cannot be trapped even in the golden nets. They would lose their sleep even if the vaguest thought of accepting honours enters their minds. I dare say that, by the grace of God, there are still some such people in this world.

Do not look down upon the humble ones;
For among them there may be some cavaliers.

In our generation we still have some people whom even the highest position and status cannot make budge from their chosen path, the path of truth and self-imposed poverty. It is wrong to presume everyone to be a salable commodity. It is true that even *huma*, the legendary bird of Urdu poetry, has its hunters. However, to presume that even this *huma* would also be captured is wrong. Such a *huma* is the dignity of humanity. I am not asking you to look for it. I am saying that you should become that *huma* yourself–a *huma* whom even the biggset fowler cannot net. Then you will become a *huma* which, if it flies over somebody's head the head is crowned. That *huma* may just be an imaginary bird, but you would become a real one; whosoever you pass by will get honour, power, faith and confidence.

Today our country and our dying society does not need scholars and intelluctuals as much as it needs the

really brave people ready for any sacrifice. This Muslim University once gave the country a son like Mohammed Ali Johar, who was the true founder of democratic life in the country. The real popular politics was started by him and it was in fact he who brought Gandhiji into the field of public life. This is a fact of history. Before him, politics was confined to political scientists and jurists. It was a highly elitist group of intellectuals who used to talk politics in their drawing rooms. But the persons who brought politics into the street, into the parks and to the massses were Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali. They were the sons of this very University of yours. They lit the fire of love for freedom and national and religious dignity in the country. They started the Khilafat Movement and, then, in the struggle for independence they acted as the vanguard, and, in fact, as the leaders. Today, the Indian society again demands true soldiers of the time. I am only voicing that demand. Every age has its soldiers. Every period has an invitation, a need peculiar to it. That Age needed the freedom ftghters, the brave nationalists, and Ali Brothers came into the field. Today the country needs people to save it from moral decline, people who would create in example of sacrifice, youths like 'People of the Cave' about whom the Quran says :

> Lo ! They were young men who believed in their lot, and We increased them in guidance: And We made firm their hearts when they stood forth, and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth. We will never call unto any God beside Him. for that would be uttering an enormity."

Today the moral degeneration has reached its lowest ebb. When a man has an accident it is an occasion which stirs the whole neighbourhood into concern and action. People gather around him. Mothers come out of their homes leaving their children behind. Someone brings water, another brings medicine saying that this brother of ours was going somewhere and has met with an accident. Today the moral degradation has reached a level where people remove the watches from the hands of the crushed, mutilated corpses and search their purses. Today instead of putting drops of water on parched, thirsty lips, people start helping themselves to their valuables. If you had read about these incidents in history books you would not believe them. People in other countries would not believe them. But we see many such train accidents. People in a nearby village see a man lying buried under the debris, his body caught between two logs. He begs them to take everything but please free him. But they would snatch the watch from his wrist and the money from his pocket and leave him dying. What can we expect from a society which has become so cold-blooded. Can anything about such a society be pleasing ? Can it be expected to survive and play a leader's role in the world ?

Something which God despises the most in men and which provokes Him to no end is oppression. Besides ascribing partners to the Almighty God, which is unforgivable, as far as faith is concerned, He forgives everything. However, as far as human destiny is concerned and the destiny of kingdoms, cultures and societies is concerned,

oppression sounds their death-knell Once oppression starts, they are given no long rope.

So my dear friends ! Hindu and Muslim youths ! You should come out to save the society from oppression : go to villages and cities and plead against these oppressions and these riots which kill only the innocent.

I have have often mentioned that a traveller is returning from Bombay with little savings and with fond hopes. He has heard that his mother is sick and as soon as he reaches home he will bring medicines for her. She would be happy to see him and would feel rejuvenated. He has hardly left the station when he is stabbed. There his mother lies groaning in pain, here he lies dead. In a society where such things happen, can any progress made, whether economic, political or educational, be a matter of pride ? Even if the number of universities becomes ten times the present number, even then the society has no reason for happiness, contentment or pride. Even if the educated are fewer but they are the types who hate oppression, sin and corruption, that society is alive, strong and may possibly lead the other nations.

My dear brothern ! My esteemed teachers ! and scholars ! I seek your forgiveness.

Forgive me, O Ghalib, For this plain speaking;
For today my heart aches a little more.

If I have exceeded my limits, if I have stated some bitter facts in a bitter tone, I may kindly be forgiven, for no amount of sweet talk can turn the bitterness of truth into sugar and honey. That is deception. If I have stated the bitter truth bitterly, I beg your forgiveness. An ill of our society is that nobody does plain speaking. A thing is said in a roundabout way, keeping one's own party or community clear, taking great precautions so that it is not caught. They are more worried about getting caught. and less about the destruction of society. But when the house is on fire, such precautions and manners of speech do not survive and the fact is stated in any language even in the crudest of manners. Even a child screams that there is a fire. Today the situation is exactly this; not more, not less. Today our society has reached the edge of the volcance and no strategy can save it. If it can be saved, it is only if the religious people, the intellectuals and the selfless people come into the field and confront the situation and set an example of action before the country, if not the world.

I repeat that this University producted Mohammed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Hasrat Mohani and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. I hope it can still produce such people and it has the capability to do so. Iqbal has expressed the same idea in a complet in which he says :

> Huntsman of *huma* you are, this is but the beginning of your chase,
> Nothing lacks a purpose in this world of flora and fauna.

You need not waste your energies on chicks and fishes. Even if you can catch a sparrow, it is nothing to be proud of. You should keep the problems of the whole country, in your view, not wasting your energy on trivial matters. Your power is precious and the real beneficiary is your society. The whole age is yours, the whole country is yours, the whole community is yours. Thus, if you waste your energies in trivial matters, you would be unfair to yourselves and you would be denying the country and the community their due. Insignificant problems do not befit your high goals and your inner potential. It does not befit the community you have inherited and the Holy Book that you have. I had recited to you the verse from the Holy Quran.

"If only there had been among the generations before you men possessing a remnant (of good sense) to dissuade (their people) from corruption on Earth .. .."

If only in those generations there was a few left who had the right sense and feelings (for the oppressed) to stop people from oppression. When they were not there, those nations were overthrown and even their mention is not found in the annals and they were totally obliterated from the pages of history.

I pray that the present Indian society, God forbid, may not meet the same fate. That is why I appeal to you

not to waste your energy, talent, genius and your power on petty matters but use them to save the country and to get the country its place of honour.

I am grateful to you for listening to my submission with patients, seriousness and attention in the true tradition of this University.